

## **Effectiveness of Administrators of Public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria Personality Variables as Predictors of Leadership Role Performance**

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### **Abstract**

The study sought to find out the predictive effect of self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem and locus of control on the instructional and motivational leadership roles performance effectiveness of administrators of public secondary schools in Cross River State of Nigeria. The relative contribution of each of the independent variables to the prediction was also investigated. The survey design was adopted for the study. The study sample consisted of 400 school administrators. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Two sets of instruments namely, Personality Factor Questionnaire (PFQ) and Administrator Leadership Role Performance Questionnaire (ALRPQ) with reliability indices of 0.75 and 0.72 respectively, were used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using stepwise multiple regression analysis. The results of the study revealed that self-efficacy, locus of control and self-concept contributed significantly to the prediction of administrators' effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance while self-esteem did not. Also, self-concept, self-efficacy and self-esteem relatively made significant contributions to the prediction of administrators' effectiveness in motivational leadership role performance while locus of control did not. Based on these findings, it was recommended among other things that personality test should be used as a tool for appointment of school administrators.

**Key words:** Secondary Schools Administrators, Leadership Role, Effectiveness of Administrators.

## Background to the Study

Secondary education occupies an important position in the Nigerian educational system. It is aimed at providing functional education to the youths, preparing them for a successful or useful living within the society and for higher education. To achieve these objectives, secondary education in the country needs effective management and good leadership at the institutional level. The school administrator (Principal/Vice principal) who directs, guides and control the activities of the teachers and students toward goal achievement is a leader. The administrator provides the formal leadership and his/her behaviour determines the extent to which both teachers and students view the school as a desirable place for teaching and learning. Thus, the secondary school system can achieve its goals and objectives through an efficient and effective leadership.

Leadership is the process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals. Edem (2003) maintains that the essence of leadership is to influence his relationship with members of his organization towards chosen goals. This means that the school administrator as an educational leader is endowed with the authority to influence the actions, behaviour, beliefs and feelings of his subordinates and expect their willing cooperation. In this study, leadership refers to the ability of the school administrator to control, direct, guide and influence the activities of teachers, students and non teaching staff towards school goals. The school administrator as a leader has many roles to contend with. Jimoh (2006) identify these roles to include curriculum/instruction, school-community relations, conflict, school financial and physical facilities management, maintenance of school discipline and motivation of staff/students among others. While Oyedeki and Fasasi (2006) identify these roles as involving supervision of school activities, maintenance of school discipline, decision making and budgeting. However, in this study the leadership roles of school administrators selected for study are instructional and motivational roles.

The school administrator as an instructional leader is responsible for issues concerning the implementation of the school curriculum (Babayemi, 2006). He has to see to the smooth operation of the school to ensure effective teaching and learning. He has to provide sound instructional leadership through classroom visitation and observation, communicating information clearly to staff and being actively involved in planning and evaluating the instructional programme. He should have the competence to provide a good instructional time table for the school and ensures that subjects are assigned to qualified staff. Busari (2005) states that in the process of performing this role, he helps teachers in their predicaments, share ideas from seminars and conferences which assist them to achieve meaningful teaching and something new. Periodic and effective instructional supervision helps to bring about changes in the routine ways of teaching. Babayemi (2006) view this role as involving the aspect of school administration which is concerned with improvement of instructional effectiveness. According to Ogunu (2000) the instructional roles of the educational leader involves stimulating, encouraging, supporting and facilitating all activities designed to improve teaching and learning in the school.

Motivation of staff and students is an important function of a school administrator. As a leader, he should have the ability to discharge his leadership roles with and through people to achieve the school goals. He has a role to play in developing his subordinates to

identify with the school and its goals. He should have the ability and competence to motivate and stimulate teachers and other members of staff not only to participate in school activities but also to commit themselves to the life of the school (Edobor, 2006). Thus, the greater the inducement pattern created by the school leader, the more committed staff will be to the school (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986). The school leader should be able to create a conducive and congenial school environment that would enhance teachers' job involvement and high productivity.

The ability of the school administrator to perform his/her leadership role effectively could be influenced by the way he/she perceives himself/herself. Brown and Dutton (1995) report that personality variables are important determinants of the ability of a leader to successfully perform a task. Personality is the total pattern of behaviour, unique to each individual and manifests in that person's values, beliefs, attitudes, expressions and actions. (Gleitman, Fridlund & Reisberg, 2004). Rogers (1947) in his self-theory of personality stresses that personality is a reciprocal relationship between the ways a person views himself, his experiences and his actual social and interpersonal experiences. The important fact here is how the person sees himself, and evaluates his worth at a particular time which could influence a person's actions, and attitudes towards work. The school administrator's knowledge of self, who he is, who he wants to be, how he wishes to be perceived, how he perceives himself and his beliefs could affect his leadership role performance. The drive behind this study, therefore, is to find out the extent to which self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control as personality characteristics can predict leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators in Cross River State, Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

Although research into the effect of self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control on school administrators' leadership role performance has not received much attention in Cross River State of Nigeria, effort is made to review related literature.

Self-concept is a complex and dynamic system of belief which an individual holds true about himself, each with a corresponding value. Bauneister (1997) refers to self-concept as the totality of inferences that a person has made about himself or herself. Thus, self-concept is an organized cognitive structure derived from experiences of one's self. Judge, Erez and Bono (1998) in their study argue that the principal reason self-concept is linked to job performance is because employees with positive self-concept are more motivated to perform their jobs better than those with negative self-concept and positive self-concept may be an ability factor. They also discover in their study that self-concept is an important personality factor in the prediction of job performance. This finding is supported by the work of Ozurumba and Ebuara (2002) who discover that self-concept and motivation for achievement significantly correlated. The study also reveals a significant interaction among academic self-concept, social self-concept and motivation for achievement. The researchers conclude that the higher the academic and social self-concepts, the higher the motivation for achievement. In an earlier study Judge, Thoresen and Pucik (1996) and Wanberg and Banas (1997) discover that managers with positive self-concept have the ability to cope more effectively with changes induced by organizational transformation. The researchers

maintain that because organizations are changing at an unprecedented rate, personality traits that enable managers to cope more effectively with change allow them to perform better. Hunter and Schmidt (1990) in their study also discover that managers with high self-concept perform significantly better in their managerial roles than those with low self-concept. They conclude that positive self-concept acts as an ability factor that motivates the managers to perform better.

Harter (1990) views self-esteem as the overall value that one places on oneself as a person. According to Costa and McCrae (1994), it refers to a person's self acceptance, self-liking and self-respect. Locke, McClelland and Knight (1996) discover in their study that leaders with high levels of self-esteem have consistent, stable and lucid views of themselves, whereas those with low self-esteem have unclear, incomplete or contradictory self views. They find out that leaders with high self-esteem are more effective in setting organizational goals and in motivating subordinates than leaders with low self esteem. They attribute this to the fact that leaders with high self-esteem have a clear focus of organizational goals and how to accomplish them. Brown and Dutton (1995) reports that leaders with low self-esteem overgeneralize the negative implications of failure. As a result, the performance of low esteem leaders decreases after a failure experience, while the same experience does not change the performance of high self-esteem leaders. Similarly, Korman (1990) discovers in his study that individuals with high self-esteem are more motivated to perform better than those with low self-esteem because successful performance allows them to maintain their self-image. The implication of this finding is that if a school leaders' self-esteem requires effective performance on a job, he/she will be motivated to exerts effective performance so as to achieve consistent cognition

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief that he/she is capable to successfully perform a task (Adeyemo & Torubeli, 2006). This belief influence the level of involvement of a school leader and the amount of stress and anxiety he/she experiences as he/she engages in a task and the extent of accomplishment realized. The higher a person's self-efficacy, the more confidence he has in his ability to succeed in a task (Alarape & Afolabi, 2001). Hysong and Quinones (1997) in their study of general measure of self-efficacy discover that self-efficacy shows moderate non-zero correlation with job performance, while Bandura (1997) and Gist and Mitchel (1992) report in their studies that self-efficacy is related to task effort and performance. Sanna (1992) shows that high self-efficacy leaders perform better in the presence of social facilitation (performing in the presence of others), whereas low self-efficacy leaders perform worse in these conditions. This finding suggests that school leaders with high self-efficacy will be more effective in discharging their duties in team contexts. Thus, persons with high self-efficacy have greater ability to change situations and perform better than those with low self-efficacy. To corroborate this fact, Schunk (1994) and Pajares (2003) in their various researches affirm that self-efficacy beliefs influence the choice leaders make and the course of action they pursue in order to accomplish a task. High self-efficacy helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities (Adeyemo & Torubeli, 2006). Pajares (2003) reports in his study that people with low self-efficacy believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters depression, stress and narrow vision of how best to handle challenging tasks and solve a problem.

Locus of control as a personality construct represents an individual perceived degree of control in life. It is concerned with a person's confidence in being able to control outcomes. Individuals with internal locus of control attribute success to their own effort and ability, whereas those with external locus of control believe their success or life is controlled by luck, fate chance or powerful others (Morshirnia, 2008). Since improvement is possible due to practice and personal determination, school leaders with internal locus of control will be motivated to master new skills and work towards school goal-achievement. Erez (1997) in his study states that this group of people actively seeks information and is more likely to have good performance and a positive attitude towards work. On the other hand, a school administrator with external locus of control is more likely to experience anxiety when confronted with failure or novel leadership task. Since he attributes success to luck or fate, he will not put in the needed effort to perform because he believes extra effort will not produce the desired outcomes. Spector (1992) in his study, reports a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and job performance. However, Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991) find the correlation between locus of control and job performance to be relatively weak. In another study, Poon, Ainuddin and Junit (2006) discover that internal locus of control is positively related to job performance of workers. Phillips and Gully (1997) in their study report that leaders with internal locus of control are more effective in role performance than those with external locus of control. This finding attests to the fact that locus of control influences one's perception of the stability of events. In other words, those who believe that they can influence circumstances (internals) are more likely to believe that their level of effort will lead to more effective job performance than those who believe they have little or no control over circumstances in their life.

The literature so far reviewed revealed that personality factors are important predictors of job performance among managers and workers. However, it is our opinion that positive self-evaluation is an ability factor that can stimulate school leaders to be effective in their leadership role performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The administration of secondary schools in Nigeria has become increasingly more complex than before as a result of increase in student enrolment, advent of new technology and the expanded curriculum. This has evoked public concern about the effectiveness of school administrators in carrying out their leadership role. This rising concern has put great pressure on school administrators as educational leaders to ensure school effectiveness. Administrators of secondary schools have leadership roles to perform in order to create and facilitate an effective teaching and learning environment for high productivity. Unfortunately some of them perform these roles haphazardly. In some schools, instructional and supervisory roles are not effectively carried out, while in others, there is high level of indiscipline among staff and students and teachers are not adequately motivated to be committed to their professional duty. As a result, there is low morale and ineffective teaching and learning. This has been blamed in part on situational variables, while others blame it on school administrators' self-perception of their ability to perform. Judge, Erez and Bono (1998) maintain that self evaluation is a crucial personality trait that influences

job performance. Therefore, given the primary importance placed upon school administrators as educational leaders, it is pertinent to investigate the predictive effect of personality factors (self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control) on their leadership role performance effectiveness.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed at:

1. Investigating the predictive effect of personality factors (Self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control) on instructional and motivational leadership roles performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.
2. Finding out the relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of the performance effectiveness of each of the leadership roles.

### **Hypotheses**

To achieve the stated aims, the following hypotheses guided the study.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Personality variables (self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control) are not significant predictors of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Personality variables are not significant predictors of motivational leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.

### **Research Method**

#### **Research Design**

The design adopted for this study was the survey design which deals with interpretation of facts without manipulating any variable. It was deemed appropriate for the present study because it makes comparisons and evaluation of existing condition as well as collection of factual information possible.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study consisted of 696 secondary school administrators (232 Principals and 464 Vice Principals) from 232 public secondary schools in Cross River State of Nigeria, made up of 410 male and 286 female administrators.

#### **Sampling Technique and Sample**

The simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study. Using, this method, 402 school administrators (225 males and 177 females) were randomly selected from a population of 696 administrators. Four teachers were randomly selected from each school to assess the leadership role performance of each administrator. It was assumed that teachers would give a more valid assessment of the leadership role performance effectiveness of school administrators than the administrators themselves.

## Research Instrument

Two research instruments designed by the researchers were used for data collection. The first instrument was titled Personality Factor Questionnaire (PFQ) for school administrators. It consisted of sections A and B. Section A sought personal data such as gender, age, years of administrative experience, qualification and rank/status of respondents. Section B was a four-point Likert type scale consisting of 24 items designed to measure the personality factors namely, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control. Each of these variables was measured using 6 items. Each item had four options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) to Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The second instrument was the Administrator's Leadership Role Performance Questionnaire (ALRPQ) for teachers to assess the school administrators in their leadership role performance. This instrument was also a 4-point Likert type scale designed to measure instructional and motivational leadership roles performance of the school administrators. Each of these variables was measured using 8 items. Each item also had four options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The two instruments were pilot tested using 40 school administrators who were not part of the study sample. The Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the two instruments. The reliability indices obtained were 0.75 for PFQ and 0.72 for ALRPQ. These values were high enough for the instruments to be considered reliable.

The instruments were administered to the respondents in their various schools by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The two instruments were administered simultaneously and were filled and returned on the spot. Out of the 402 copies of the instrument administered, 400 were correctly filled and returned. This gave a return rate of 99.5%. Data collection took about two weeks. All positively worded items were scored 4 points for Strongly Agree, 3 points for Agree, 2 points for Disagree and 1 point for Strongly Disagree. The scoring technique was reverse for all negatively worded items. Data collected were analyzed using stepwise multiple regression statistical technique to find out the predictive effect of self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control on instructional and motivational leadership roles performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.

## Result

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Personality variables (self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control) are not significant predictors of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.

The results of data analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1**

Multiple Regression Analysis of personality variables as predictors of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness.

Multiple R	=	0.477		
Multiple R square	=	0.228		
Standard Error of Estimate	=	17.202		
Source of Variance	Ss	df	Ms	F
Regression	10495.55	4	2623.89	14.12*
Residual	73410.78	395	185.85	
Total	83906.33	399		

\* $p < .05$ ;  $df = 4 \text{ \& } 395$ ; critical-F = 2.39

Table 1 shows a coefficient of multiple regression of 0.477 and multiple R square ( $R^2$ ) of .228. This indicates that the independent variables contributed 22.80% of the variance in instructional leadership role performance effectiveness. The result of analysis of variance gave an F-value of 14.12. This was found to be greater than the critical F-value of 2.39 at .05 alpha level with 4 and 395 degrees of freedom. Thus, the calculated F-value was statistically significant.

**Table 2**

Relative contribution of personality variables to the prediction of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness.

Personality Variables	Regression Coefficient 'B'	Standard Error	Standardized 'Beta'	T-ratio Coefficient	Sig. P
Self-concept	0.270	0.068	0.240	3.971	<.05
Self-esteem	-2.49E-02	0.164	-0.009	-0.152	0.41
Self-efficacy	0.384	0.069	0.287	5.580	<.05
Locus of control	0.305	0.059	0.307	5.169	<.05
Constant	10.412				

Table 2 reveals that three of the independent variables, self-efficacy ( $t=5.580$ ,  $p<.05$ ), locus of control ( $t = 5.169$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and self-concept ( $t = 3.971$ ;  $p<.05$ ) in that order, relatively make significant contributions to the predication of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.



**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Personality variables are not significant predictors of motivational leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.  
The results of data analysis are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3**

Multiple Regression Analysis of Personality Variables as predictors of motivational leadership role performance effectiveness.

Multiple R	=	0.415		
Multiple R square	=	0.172		
Standard Error of Estimate	=	15.950		
Source of Variance	Ss	df	Ms	F
Regression	909.65	4	227.41	12.12*
Residual	7335.47	395	18.57	
Total	8245.12	399		

\*p< .05; df = 4 & 395; critical-F = 2.39

Table 3 reveals a coefficient of multiple regression of 0.415 and multiple R square (R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.172. This shows that the independent variables contributed 17.20% of the variance in motivational leadership role performance effectiveness. Analysis of variance gave an F-value of 12.25 which was found to be greater than the critical F-value of 2.39 at .05 alpha level with 4 and 395 degrees of freedom. This means that the observed F-value of 12.25 was statistically significant.

**Table 4**

Relative contribution of personality variables to the prediction of Motivational Leadership Role Performance Effectiveness.

Personality Variables	Regression Coefficient 'B'	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient 'Beta'	T-ratio	Sig. P
Self-Concept	0.344	0.112	.0632	3.071*	<.05
Self-esteem	0.189	0.080	.0354	2.363*	<.05
Self-efficacy	0.062	0.023	.0349	2.696*	<.05
Locus of control	0.032	0.076	.0012	0.421	.689
Constant	8.987				

Table 4 shows that self-concept ( $t=3.071$ ;  $p<.05$ ), self-efficacy ( $t= 2.696$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and self-esteem ( $t = 2.363$ ;  $p<.05$ ) in that order, relatively make significant contributions to the prediction of motivational leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators.

## Discussion of findings

The first result of the study shows that the four personality variables when joined together significantly predict instructional leadership role performance effectiveness of school administrators. This depicts that the effectiveness of the instructional leadership role performance did not happen by chance. Self-efficacy, locus of control and self-concept in that order relatively made significant contributions to the prediction of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness, while self-esteem did not. This finding reveals that self-efficacy is the most potent contributor to the prediction.

This finding could be attributed to the fact that school administrators participating in this study have high self-efficacy beliefs. Such administrators have the ability to facilitate effective teaching and learning in their schools. Thus, discharging their instructional leadership role effectively. This finding is supported by the works of Bandura (1997) and Gist and Mitchel (1992) who discover that self-efficacy is related to task effort and performance. Similarly, Schunk (1994) and Pajares (2003) affirm that self-efficacy beliefs influence the choice leaders make and the course of action they take in order to accomplish a task. The higher a person's self-efficacy the more confidence he has in his ability to succeed in a task (Alarape & Afolabi, 2006). Thus, self-efficacy belief is a strong predictor of the level of accomplishment of a task that a school leader finally attains.

The study also establishes that locus of control is a contributor to the prediction of instructional leadership role performance effectiveness. The explanation to this finding could be that the school administrators attribute their success in instructional role performance to their personal efforts and ability and not to luck and fate. Since improvement is possible through practice and personal determination, school administrators with internal locus of control are motivated to master new skills and work towards school goal-achievement. To corroborate this finding, Poon, Ainuddin and Junit (2006) and Philips and Gully (1997) in their various studies discover a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and job performance. However, Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991) report a weak correlation between locus of control and job performance. This study also reveals that self-concept relatively contributes to administrators' effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance. This finding is in agreement with the work of Ozurumba and Ebuara (2002) who discover that self-concept and motivation for achievement significantly correlated. Similarly Judge, Thoresen and Pucik (1996), Wanberg and Banas (1997) report that managers with positive self-concept have the ability to cope more effectively with changes induced by organizational transformation than those with negative self- concept.

The second finding of this study reveals that personality variables significantly predict motivational leadership role performance effectiveness of school administrators. Thus, the administrators' effectiveness in motivational leadership role performance does not occur by chance. The independent variables, self-concept, self-efficacy and self-esteem, in that order,

relatively make significant contributions to the prediction of administrators' effectiveness in motivational role performance, while locus of control does not. The result shows that self-concept is the major contributor to the prediction. The explanation to this finding is not far fetched. School administrators involved in this study have positive self-concept which acts as an ability factor to stimulate them to carry out their motivational leadership role efficiently. The finding is in consonant with the research finding of Judge, Erez and Bono (1998) who report that self-concept is an important personality factor in the prediction of job performance. This personality construct being primarily cognitive, directs, controls and determines the administrator's behaviour and actions towards effective performance of their motivational leadership role. Thus, self-concept is predictive of leadership effectiveness (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990).

The study also indicates that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of motivational leadership role performance effectiveness. The explanation is that the school administrators have high self efficacy and this influences their level of job involvement and commitment. Hence, their effectiveness in motivational leadership role performance. This finding agrees with the research finding of Sana (1992) who discovers that high self-efficacy leaders perform better in the presence of social facilitation, whereas, low self-efficacy leaders perform worse in these conditions. Therefore, school administrators with high self-efficacy will be more effective in discharging their motivational leadership role in team contexts since they work with and through people to achieve school effectiveness. This finding also corroborates the research finding of Hysong and Quinones (1997) who report that a moderate correlation exists between self-efficacy and job performance.

The finding also shows that self-esteem also makes a significant contribution to the prediction of effectiveness in motivational leadership role performance. This finding reveals that participants in this study have consistent, stable and positive perception of themselves. This finding agrees with the work of Locke, McClear and Knight (1996) who discover that leaders with high self-esteem are more effective in setting organizational goals and in motivating their subordinates than leaders with low self esteem. Thus, leaders with high self-esteem have a clear focus of organizational goals and how to accomplishment them.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The conclusion drawn from this study is that personality variables namely, self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control are significant predictors of leadership role performance effectiveness of secondary school administrators in Cross River State, Nigeria. Self-concept, self-efficacy and locus of control relatively make significant contributions to the prediction of effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of school administrators, while self-esteem does not. Similarly, self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy contribute to the prediction of effectiveness in motivational leadership role performance. Therefore, self evaluation is an important determinant of the effectiveness in leadership role performance of school administrators. The belief system of a school leader plays a focal role in determining his/her ability to successfully perform his/her leadership roles. This study, therefore, provides a base of knowledge that relates personality variables of secondary school administrators to their daily practices. In the light of the finding of this study it is.

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